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hope to have much hand in the governing of the country; but we can all do something for the political life within the limits of our parishes. As a recent writer has said, "municipal governments fix, to a large degree, standards of political morality." The great thing, I think, is to live in the part with the constant sense that we are working for the whole; and then to try to spread out into the whole the spirit of brotherhood that can more readily grow up within the narrower circle.

J. S. MACKENZIE.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, CARDIFF.

THE TASK OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.*

THE task of the ages—if, believing in evolution, we admit that they have any task—is the realization of self-conscious personalities, freely related to each other through the three attributes of knowledge, discriminating affection and origina-tive will. Such personalities alone can be true ends, since they alone have value on their own account.

This task, though it can obviously have neither beginning nor end, is worked out through a progress marked by epochs, each of which has its own appointed share, so to speak, in the whole. These epochs having no clear lines of demarcation, it is customary to identify them with centuries, and to ask what forms of progress have marked each particular century—century being a perfectly arbitrary division of time.

With a view to determining the task of the twentieth century, it would be well if we should trace as far back as possible the whole course of human development (for each part receives the meaning from the whole); but as space forbids this, we must be content to gain what light we can by going back for a few centuries, say to the close of the Middle Age.

*A lecture given before the Society for Ethical Culture of Philadelphia, by the late Thomas Davidson.

The task of that age may be stated in a few words. It consisted in keeping steadily before each individual soul the fact of its own eternity and impressing upon it that its weal or woe, throughout that eternity, depended upon its pursuing a definite course of conduct. So far, nothing could have been better. But, unfortunately,—though, as we may well believe, necessarily,—these things were presented in an external, dramatic way, as arbitrary revelations from an external God, and backed by such awesome sanctions as made the soul feel itself a mere helpless worm of the dust, in presence of an irresponsible omnipotence. It felt that its eternity was a mere gift of grace or charity, utterly capricious, because utterly undeserved (the saints vied with one another in magnifying their own unworthiness!), while its conduct was determined by external laws, supported by a system of purely arbitrary rewards and punishments, such as made obedience a mere matter of slavish, selfish prudence, however it might cloak itself as love to the lawgiver. In one word, human life in these ages was entirely regulated by authority, which, though it might produce a certain amount of socially desirable conduct, as even the poorest of motives such as fear or avarice may, rendered all true morality, which depends upon a free, rational determination of the will, utterly impossible. The excuse for such authority was the fantastic belief that human nature, as such, was utterly fallen, degraded, and incapable of self-direction, that, hence, if ever it was to reach its true end, it must entirely submit itself, *ut cadaver*, to external guidance, that is, authority, or direct inspiration. This attitude of mind is admirably expressed in a hymn, still much and reverently sung in our churches:

“Direct, control, suggest this day,
All I design, or do, or say,
That all my powers and all my might
In Thy full glory may unite.”

This is, of course, a complete abdication of self-guidance, an appeal to God to be moral for us—that we may glorify Him!

In a system which accepted authority as the guide of life on pain of damnation, there was, of course, no room for freedom

of any sort, freedom of thought, freedom of affection, or freedom of will. And, as a matter of fact, all these forms of freedom were, as far as possible, vigorously suppressed. Free inquiry into the laws and nature of the world gave way to a timid, scholastic discussion of the meaning of authority. The natural affections, though they could not be entirely disowned, were grudgingly admitted to a place in life, and even as late as the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, an anathema was pronounced upon any one who should say that the state of virginity and celibacy was not better than the state of matrimony. And this is to-day the position of the Roman Catholic Church. Above all, free self-determination of the will, possible only through free inquiry and free affection, was placed under the ban. The mediæval church, in part directly, in part indirectly through the state, sought to regulate every thought, feeling, word, and deed of its members, and of all whom it claimed as such. When it was resisted, it shrank from no extremes.

The task of the centuries since the close of the Middle Age has been, gradually to remove this yoke of authority, and to raise men to freedom of thought, affection, and will—in a word, to rational self-guidance, or moral life. This has been done, partly through actual resistance to authority, a resistance necessitated by social suffering, and partly through discoveries in the worlds of nature, history and philosophy.

The sixteenth century was marked by great advances in all directions. The discovery of America, the proof positive of the earth's rotundity, and the Copernican astronomy utterly broke up the mediæval view of the universe, the science of astrology, and the astronomical ethics depending on both, and thus freed men from a whole load of ignorance and superstition in matters physical and moral. At the same time, the Reformation among the Germanic nations freed northern Europe from papal authority, and introduced the principle of free inquiry (without, indeed, recognizing its full import), while the Pagan Renaissance among the Latin peoples went far to free the south from that nature-distorting asceticism to which much of the church's authority was due, and to make the perfection of

human nature, instead of the glory of God, the end of human activity. Under the influence of both these movements, education of a human sort spread rapidly, art revived, and the human mind advanced toward autonomy.

The seventeenth century is, unlike the sixteenth, which had been largely a period of destruction in matters spiritual, a period of reconstruction. Now, not only are the old sciences and philosophies put aside, but new sciences and new philosophies spring up to take their place. And, strange to say, these new sciences and philosophies, are all animated by a common spirit utterly different from that of the Middle Age. Just at the time when the earth, man's abode, ceased to be regarded as the centre of the physical universe, man himself came to be regarded as the centre of the spiritual universe. It is this fact that makes the modern world, as distinguished from the ancient and mediæval. Though the meaning of this fact has been but slowly coming to consciousness, it is now obvious enough to anyone who cares to think. It is this: whereas in the older world all truth was tried by an external authority, supposed to be revealed, and human reason was relegated to a thrall's place; in the modern world, human reason is elevated to the first place, and all authority, nay, even the existence of God himself, has to come before its tribunal, and accept its verdict. Thus, truth is no longer dependent upon authority but authority upon truth. If God cannot prove his existence and authority to human reason, then reason—man—will have none of them. It would be impossible to overstate the momentousness of this change. It is not only a change from authority to truth, and from faith to science; it is a change from moral servitude to moral freedom. For man is free only when reason is the ultimate court of appeal.

This great change is due mainly to two men—the English Protestant Locke, and the French Catholic Descartes; but we find it in earlier writers—in Hooker and Hobbes, for example. Both these latter writers place the origin and, therefore, the authority of human society in a social contract, and not in divine appointment, and are thus the parents of Rousseau and the French Revolution. Locke and Descartes, working on

different lines, came practically to the same conclusion, namely, that in the human consciousness lie the test and reality of all truth, and, therefore, of all life guidance. From them come all modern thought, in all its different phases, from the crassest materialism to the flimsiest idealism. To the seventeenth century belong Leibniz and Spinoza, Newton and Galileo, Vico and Grotius—hence the beginnings of modern science in all its branches. To it also belong the first effective movements toward what may be called individualism, which was destined to play such a part in the subsequent world. They take their rise in Holland, England, Scotland, and find their overt expression in the three great anthropocentric movements of the century, the two English revolutions and the foundation of a new order of things, whose very essence is individualism, in the newly-discovered continent beyond the Western Sea. In all these men are more or less blindly asserting their moral rights, their right to freedom of action, guided by free reason and free affection. If the sixteenth century saw the collapse of external spiritual authority and the rise of rationalism, the seventeenth saw the collapse of external temporal authority and the rise of individualism, backed too by a philosophy which showed it to be rational and practicable.

In the eighteenth century the movements of the two previous centuries toward freedom of thought and individualism in life were carried to extremes, and a new movement begun, what may be called the movement toward economic freedom. It is *par excellence* the century of down-breaking in all the spheres of life and thought. Voltaire overthrew thrones with a jest, and made belief in revealed authority forever impossible; Rousseau discarded all conventionalities and external repressive institutions, called for a return to nature, and made subjective sentiment the rule of life—individualism with a vengeance! Hume, the friend of Rousseau, supplied a philosophy for all this, by reducing all thought to clusters of impressions and ideas, and defying these to get beyond themselves either to a world of objects, or to a subject. Kant, accepting this result, showed how the world that we know, subjects and all, can be built up of these clusters, provided we bring out all

that is implicit in them. Goethe, with Titanic nature, showed that man works out his own destiny by casting off his limitations and rising to spiritual freedom among free men—that, as Tennyson puts it, “man is man and master of his fate.” Lastly, Adam Smith, devoting himself to a sphere of human action which thinking men had too long affected to despise, demanded freedom in the economic world, asserted that the shackles should be struck from the hands of labor, and that complete freedom of production and trade should be permitted—*laissez faire, laissez passer*—insisting, with perfect truth, that freedom of subsistence is the condition of all other freedom. Meanwhile, individualism, the demand of the individual for recognition as an absolute end, found public utterance in the two great events of the century, the American and French Revolutions, in which men boldly declared that they were the lords, not the slaves or tools of institutions, and that any institution or law which they could or would acknowledge, on pain of denying their manhood, must be the expression of their own reason, a means toward the attainment of their own ends, as spiritual beings.

Such, after three hundred years of heroic toil and martyrdom, was the condition of things at the opening of the nineteenth century. One would be glad to be able to say that all the movements toward freedom, begun and carried on in those years were continued, without interruption, till the present day. Some of them have, indeed, been so, and new ones have been initiated; but others have suffered a setback and a reaction. This was, perhaps, inevitable, and is due to the fact that, in the transition from a theological, theocentric and supernatural view of the world, to a scientific, anthropocentric and natural one, and in the hand-to-hand struggle for individual liberty, two things dear to the human heart and essential to its peace were lost, to a large extent; (1) the sense of personal eternity and immortality, and those hopes that go with it—things which had for so long rested upon a supernatural basis, and seemed to vanish when this was withdrawn; (2) that settled and fixed condition of society which had been attained under monarchic institutions, and which had been greatly disturbed

by the inroads of individualism, especially by that great explosion thereof, the French Revolution. The consequence was that, early in the century there set in a strong reaction against individualism, both in thought and practice, a reaction in favor of faith and supernaturalism, on the one hand, and of monarchy and despotism, on the other. In the Latin countries of Europe this took the form of a sentimental neo-Catholicism, whose hierophants were men like Bonnet, de Maistre, Chateaubriand, and of the Napoleonic empire succeeded by the restoration of royalty. In the Germanic countries, and in Russia, it produced various philosophies whose aim was to make the old supernatural religion palatable to awakened reason, and at the same time strengthen the hands of monarchies, ultimately developing some of them into empires, *e. g.*, Germany. America was not sensibly affected by any of these things, except by some of the reactionary philosophies—Scottish Reidism and German Hegelianism. The former, by depreciating human reason which seemed to have led to Hume's sceptical results, formed what seemed a vacancy left for revelation, whose content, in some form, human nature appeared to demand; and the result was eagerly seized upon by the friends of orthodoxy, so that not only in Great Britain, but also in America, the Scottish Philosophy became very widely popular. The latter, which frankly called itself a restoration-philosophy, by a firework of dialectics and an impudent distortion of the facts of history, undertook to show that Christianity, or that fairy changeling which it chose to call Christianity (for it had made away with the real thing) was the absolute religion; and these again have been believed by many champions of orthodoxy both in churches and universities. Hegelianism undertook, further, to show that the Prussian military state, of which, as professor in Berlin, Hegel was an official, was the ideal form of government, and belief in this has, in no small degree, contributed to the building up of the German despotic empire. All this the restoration-philosophy accomplished at a heavy expense—the expense of human individuality, human freedom, human immortality, and even of God. Hegelianism, whatever its author and disciples may say, knows none of these things, being only

a framework of logical categories. It has been a great instrument of reaction, not merely in philosophy and politics, but also, and still more so, in economics; for socialism, which is a mere return to feudal economics, is simply Hegelianism in economics. Marx merely substituted for Hegel's dialectic process, the process of economic production. But it must be admitted that, besides the reactionary philosophy of Hegel, socialism has another root in the economic conditions of the time, which themselves are a result of advancing science. The application of discoveries in physics to machinery for production, transport and communication has brought about, in the economic world of the country, a condition of things, for which the old economic theories offer no guide, a series of problems for which they contain no solution. The workman no longer owns his tools, as in former days, and thus becomes inevitably in large measure the slave of the man who does. At the same time it has become possible for all the world to compete with all the world, and since, all other things being equal, the successful competitor is he who can obtain his products at the lowest wages, there is a continual tendency to make wages lower and lower till they reach the starvation point. Of the various attempts to remedy these two evils none can be said to have proved entirely successful, not even trades-unions or labor-unions. The owners of the instruments of production are still able to exercise a certain amount of tyranny over the workingmen, while the latter still lead a precarious life, and are, in many cases, subject to dire poverty and suffering. Here socialism steps in and says it can solve both difficulties. It calls upon the state to deprive the employers of labor of the instruments of production, and so become itself the employer of labor, in which case, the entire working class, to which then almost everybody would belong, would become state officials, and have their wages regulated equitably (so it is believed) by the state. In this way, economic tyranny, competition, and poverty would cease, and the result would be a "coöperative commonwealth," a blessed Utopia. The propounders of this scheme—mostly persons to whom true liberty does not seem dear—fail to see that, even if poverty could in this way be made to cease (and

that is avowedly their chief object), it would be at the expense of some of the noblest privileges of the race—of personal liberty, enterprise, and initiative,—and that it could hardly fail to be fatal to all the higher manifestations of intellect and affection, to philosophy, science, art and literature. At all events, socialism is distinctly a reactionary movement, of the same nature as despotism in politics, and ecclesiastical authority in thought. In all these there is a retrogression from free variety in harmony, to dead monotony in authority.

But in spite of all these reactionary movements, from which we are still sadly suffering, in both thought and life, the nineteenth century has been marked by great and manifold progress toward freedom, in many and many directions. In the economic world, despite all drawbacks, the working class is in every way better off than it was a century ago, and has more opportunity and taste for culture; the power and tyranny of capital has been curbed and regulated. In the political sphere, slavery has been abolished in all civilized countries, and thus the dignity of the individual spirit, as an end in itself, universally acknowledged. France has returned to republicanism; England and Italy have become distinctly democratic; the United States has been confirmed in its devotion to freedom; a strong movement is at work in favor of suffrage and political power for women. Everywhere the reluctance to go to war is growing. In the religious world greater advance has been made toward toleration and freedom of thought than in any period in the world's history. Persecution for opinion's sake is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Philosophy, science, historic research and literary criticism have combined to assault the gloomy Bastille of supernaturalism and revelation, and it is now as good as leveled to the ground, albeit the news of that fact, with all our newspapers, does not spread very rapidly. More and more religion has come to mean a rational ethical life suitable to the nature of free spirits. Education has increased and spread as never before; illiteracy is rapidly disappearing. Even our universities, half mediæval, half ecclesiastical as they still mostly are, have made considerable advance in adapting their instruction to the needs of modern life, and

contributing their mite to the cause of freedom. Their number, too, especially in this country, has enormously increased. Of progress in the arts and sciences one can only say that it has been greater in this century than in all the other known centuries put together. It would be well if the same could be said of the science of sciences—philosophy. But alas! it cannot. Philosophy since Kant left it, has rather gone backwards than forwards, wandering off either into a crude materialism or an empty, merely formal idealism. At present it has come almost to a standstill, ashamed to go back openly to the absurdities of old theology and afraid to go forward openly to pure science destitute of theology. It is in a sore strait, and this largely owing to the fact that its professors mostly occupy paid positions in unemancipated colleges and universities. There are no free-lances hardly nowadays in thought, no Brunos, Spinozas, Schopenhauers. Yet there are not wanting signs of better things. Biology, physiology and psychology, which at present try to usurp the field of philosophy, may justify themselves by asserting, as they may with truth, that they are preparing the material for a truer system of philosophy than any that ever before appeared. If philosophy is the unification by reason of the world presented to it in consciousness, then every fresh discovery in science, every gap filled in that world, is an advance toward a complete philosophy. So that we have good reason to hope well even of philosophy in the next century.

We stand now at the end of a century looking backward with mingled joy and regret, and forward with mingled hope and anxiety. What has been done in the past centuries we have glanced at and tried to estimate; what remains to be done, that can be done, in that which is approaching, we must now consider. That is its task. And we may say at once that, since the task of all the centuries is to raise mankind, every member of it, to complete and actual moral freedom, which rests upon insight, just affection, and strong will, realizing themselves in a social order, the task of the twentieth is to perform its share in that. And it can do this only by carrying on those movements toward moral freedom which were set afoot in the past,

and doing its best to crush out all reactionary movements toward unfreedom spiritual or temporal.

And, first and foremost, it must begin with a rejuvenated philosophy. Starting from the basis of Kant, from whom, barring a few inconsistencies, there is no getting away, avoiding the mistakes and misrepresentations of his more famous followers, and taking advantage of all that has been revealed by the sciences of evolution, in nature and culture, it must seek to unify the world in the only way possible—through the unity of the human spirit—without assuming any other principle of unity, God, nature, or the like. If such exist, that will appear in the process of unification.

The new philosophy will, of necessity, be an endeavor to account for the world as the evolution of consciousness and its content, or, more strictly, of the world as the content of a consciousness; for such is the only world we can speak of or know. In truth, if we consider carefully, we shall see that the world is nothing more than a complex of feelings grouped and distinguished in time and space with reference to the satisfaction of desire. If we ask how it has been evolved, and what is its moving principle, we shall be compelled to say that it is due to desire, the only prime mover conceivable, seeking its own satisfaction. Desire is the Absolute, the primal fact in the universe, the principle that accounts for the whole. Considering further, we shall come to see that such an Absolute implies a number of individuals, monads of desire, incommunicable, and therefore, indestructible, each seeking satisfaction through all the rest, and in so doing, evolving the physical world, which is the result of manifold desires seeking satisfaction through mutual aid. Nay, we may go further, and show that the moral world, with all its institutions,—a world which it has been customary to set over against the physical, as governed by entirely different principles—is evolved by a continuation of the same process, and that there is no break or gulf between them. We shall then recognize that morality itself is nothing more than the effort to satisfy to the full the desire that we, each of us, have; and since this can be done only through the satisfaction of all other desires, that the completest selfishness is also the

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completest unselfishness; that hedonism and rigorism, egoism and altruism are the same thing.

I cannot here enter further into the details of this philosophy, though it would not be difficult to work these out into lucidity. I merely wish to show in general its nature, method, and moral results, and to insist that without a philosophy, that is a completely rational account of the world, eschewing faith, agnosticism and every form of unintelligence, we cannot make any sure-footed progress at all. Before we can deal confidently with the world and our relations to it, that is, before we can live an open-eyed life, we must understand the world, including ourselves, or better ourselves including the world. It is all very well to say that a good life is worth striving for on its own account, and that no philosophy is needed in order to do that; but those who do so forget that without a philosophy it is impossible to say what a good life is, without falling back upon mere popular opinion or prejudice—a poor resort. Thus, then, the first and most fundamental task of the coming century is the elaboration of a philosophy of the world in consciousness. This cannot be too strongly insisted upon; for without it our best efforts are mere gropings in the dark, without clue and without aim; and whatever is without aim is without inspiration. And along with this philosophy must go an utter repudiation of everything that conflicts with it, no matter what authority it may claim. All pretended revelation, all supernaturalism, all unintelligible dogmas and mysteries, all religions that cannot make good their claims at the tribunal of reason, and romantic and sentimental views of life, all agnosticism must be quietly but resolutely brushed aside. We must live by truth and truth alone. If it be insisted that without supernatural religion we know nothing of immortality, that must be resolutely denied; for philosophy, when disburdened of theology, is fully capable of showing that the self-conscious being is above time. In continuing to palter with the dogmas of Christian supernaturalism to the exclusion of nobler things, we are disloyal to truth and to all the best interests of humanity. Nay, we are even disloyal to the first principles of the government under which we live. For while Chris-

tianity finds the source of all authority in a will external to man's, this government finds it in man's. The former leaves man a slave, the latter makes him free. Between the two there is no compromise or truce possible, and the attempt to make such brings only confusion and complication such as retards our progress at the present day. The simple truth is that this republic is, in principle, a religion far nobler, and far more full of promise, than any that has ever before appeared on the face of the earth. It alone acknowledges man to be the source of moral authority, hence to be a free being, the carver of his own eternal destiny. Well did Washington say, in an early document, that this is in no sense a Christian country. It is something far higher than that: it is the country for the realization of divine humanity—the type and foreshadow of the only heaven that is conceivable. We might, indeed, fairly say that the task of the twentieth century, and of all the succeeding ones, is simply the realization of the ideal of individual freedom, involving self-existence, that lies at the basis of our republic. That ideal implies that the divine is not a single spirit, of which all other spirits, so-called, are merely creations, that is, self-less phenomena, but that it is a republic of self-existent spirits, each seeking the realization of its desires through love, through intimacy with all the rest, and finding its heaven in such intimacy. Such a republic ours endeavors to be, and as such it is the expression of the ultimate and absolute religion. For us, and perhaps for us alone, true patriotism and true religion are identical. And this we have half recognized in a curious way. We have disallowed external divine authority in our government, and we have refused to let supernatural religion be taught in our public schools; but yet we have not openly introduced into either the religion of free spirit, the religious ideal upon which all our institutions rest. Thus our state and our schools are without religious sanctions, except such as they surreptitiously borrow from a religion of external authority utterly alien to them in spirit, and continually tending to overthrow them. This sad condition of things it is part of the task of the approaching century to put an end to, wiping out that distracting and confusing

dualism of church and state, of religious and civic life, which robs the former of content, and the latter of enthusiasm, thus degrading both. In the future American republicanism must be not merely a system of politics, but also a religion, the sole and sufficient religion of every American free citizen. As a religion, it will not only continually labor and tend to validate the rights of every individual spirit, as an end to itself and as a contributor to all other ends, and so to do away with all those pitiful conflicts that, for the sake of half-animal enjoyments, range class against class, giving rise to such morbid phenomena as socialism and anarchism, both subversive of true freedom, but it will also show us that this temporal life of ours on earth is a necessary phase of eternal life, which will and must be just what we, with our knowledge, love, and will desire that it shall be.

In order that our philosophy may be truly a unified account of the evolving world, we must labor unremittingly to know, that is, to arrange and classify the facts and processes of that world. And this means that one important part of the coming century's task will be to "make knowledge circle with the winds," to turn everybody into a devoted student. It is truly amazing how few people in our time are real students, how many know almost nothing of the view of existence revealed by modern science and philosophy; for how many the world is a meaningless show, full of grim hobgoblins, among which they stagger round in doubt or, at best, in blind faith, or yet blinder agnosticism. At first sight it seems preposterous to say that everybody must become a student, and it is sneeringly asked: How can people who have to spend all their time and energy in earning a bare livelihood find time or energy to be students? And yet that is the only condition on which the ideal of our nation can ever become a reality. This nation owes it to every one of its citizens to see to it that he has time and strength left to be a student. That is simple justice. And one of the tasks of the century must be to make that possible. It is not very long since the notion that every person should be taught to write and cipher was scouted as an impossible chimera. To-day this is almost an accomplished fact, and the state recog-

nizes that, in simple justice, it owes this to its citizens. Now that we have attained universal common-school education, we must proceed and make universal college education a fact. I do not say that the state should undertake to give this education; far from it! but I do say that the state should insist upon every one of its citizens being raised to that grade of intelligence which renders its own existence, as what it claims to be, a government by and for free men, permanently possible, and should remove all economic and other obstacles that stand in the way of this. Citizenship should be a college degree, and the only degree, and all persons who have not taken it should be denied all share in political power. That is only justice to them, as well as to other citizens; for to put political power into the hands of those who do not understand the purpose and meaning of political institutions is the height of injustice and stupidity.

From what has been said, it must be evident that the educational task of the twentieth century cannot be performed without a great change in our present economic conditions; since under these such education is impossible. They must be replaced by others which will make it possible for every parent to give his children a college education. How is this to be done? The readiest answer will be, By socialism. But we have already seen that this involves the loss of the very thing for which the state exists, personal liberty. Some other way must, therefore, be found, which shall preserve the rights of free individuality, and yet insure it the material conditions for self-development. And this way, it seems to me, can be reached under the same circumstances that would render socialism possible; that is, when the majority of the people are convinced that such way ought to be found and are prepared to make the necessary sacrifices. The great economic task of the coming century will consist in bringing this conviction home to the great body of the people, and preparing them for the needed progress. And this can be done only by introducing a new ideal of life, and a new valuation of the things that enter into it. This must be the outcome of our new philosophy, which by showing us that the only thing truly valuable in existence is

spiritual perfection, and the only heaven the community of saints, that is, the intimacy of free, pure, wise, loving, and beneficent spirits, must induce us to transfer the interest which we now attribute to material wealth, to that for which wealth is merely a means. Then people, instead of entering upon business for the vulgar purpose of acquiring wealth for selfish comfort and vain display, will do so in order to obtain culture for themselves and families and to aid their fellows in doing the same. Their aim in the employment of labor will be, not to lower, but to raise wages; or better still, to give no wages at all, but a share and an interest in their business itself. They will ask themselves, not, How many material things can I possess? but, How many men can I enable to rise to the heights of spiritual culture and to live lives worthy of immortal beings, worthy of the deepest friendship and love? To-day men's chief interest is in things, and not in men; real devoted friendship is a thing almost unknown. But surely there is something exceedingly uncultured and vulgar in the character of people who are willing to surround themselves with impudent luxury which in no way contributes to their spiritual elevation, while they allow perhaps hundreds of men and women in the immediate neighborhood to struggle on darkly in poverty, ignorance, and vice, which utterly unfit them for all the nobler forms of spiritual intimacy, for all the joys of heaven. There is something truly hideous in all this, and it is only our familiarity with it that prevents us from rising up in indignation against it.

I say then that the economic task of the twentieth century is to convince men and women of the true meaning and function of material possessions, to show them that the real "wealth of nations" is a body of cultured citizens, rich in knowledge, love, and will, not a mass of material things owned by a pack of spiritual boors. When this conviction has been reached, and each man makes the culture of all his chief end, then there will be no need for enslaving socialism; then the conflicts between capital and labor will cease, and with them other minor difficulties, such as the servant question, the land question, and the currency question.

I have thus, I think, enumerated the main departments of the task of the twentieth century. What I have said may be recapitulated in a few words. The task before us is (1) to come to clearness with regard to the nature and destiny of man, by an appeal to science, and an eschewing of all authority however hoary, and (2) having discovered that he is an eternal being, destined to grow forever in knowledge, love, and will, through deeper and ever deeper relations to his fellow-beings, whose interaction constitutes the world, to supply the conditions most favorable to this growth, by making it the conscious aim of every member of the race. A serious effort to perform this task would initiate a new era in the world's history—the era of divine humanity, the era of the "Eternal Gospel" and of the "Holy Spirit," so long foreshadowed by poet and sage, and let no one say that, in eschewing authority and revelation, we are diminishing the hopes of men, or accepting a lower ideal of heroism and sainthood than has existed in the past. Far from it! We are turning hopes into certainties, and calling, for the first time in the world's history, for true morality—a morality which extends to every faculty of the human being, in all his relations with himself and fellows, and which looks forward to no reward which it can possibly miss, since that reward is itself. Furthermore, let no one say that such a life-view leaves nothing to the imagination, makes no place for art or poetry. The very reverse is true. By removing those grotesque and stereotyped imaginings of the future life, which dwarfed and stiffened the fancy, and contracted the field of ideal art, it throws open to imagination and art the entire field of possible spiritual achievement and spiritual bliss, and invites them to construct ever higher and more varied ideals of human nobility and human intimacy. For what is art but the depiction of the triumph of spirit, revealed to enthusiasm as beauty, as that form of existence which needs no excuse.

I suppose there is no difference of opinion with regard to the task of the future: it is to do away with poverty, ignorance, and vice, and to raise men to spiritual culture and freedom, to make of earth what we would wish heaven to be. But two questions still face us: (1) How shall this condition be

brought about, and (2) What sort of social order does it imply? We shall treat them in this order.

As to the former: the task before us demands, first of all, apostles, earnest devoted men, who, having risen to a clear insight into man's nature and his eternal destiny, and recognized that as the only end worth working for, are ready to devote themselves, body and soul, like Paul of old, to its attainment. But alas! this demand is not easily met. Men of real earnestness in regard to spiritual attainment are to-day rare as perhaps never before. The day of spiritual heroism seems to have passed. Everyone is eager to find somewhere to lay his head, some comfortable nook or niche in which he may be free from struggle and the need for great moral initiative. There is moral and intellectual cowardice almost everywhere. There is, indeed, a widely spread sentiment of kindness, miscalled humanity, which would be pleased to see every human being placed beyond the reach of pain and struggle, beyond the need of strong willing, and the world reduced to an easy-going, thoughtless garden of dalliance; but the fiery enthusiasm for human worth, for the divine-human ideal, where do we find it? And yet that is what must be found ere the task of the twentieth century can begin. Somewhere there must be found a small devoted band of men and women of fearless character, clear philosophic insight, and mighty spiritual love, who, living a divine life in their relations to each other, shall labor, with all the strength that is in them, to lift their fellows into the same divine life. Forming a "settlement" in some city or town, they must preach and teach and toil, not merely among the poor and needy, but also, and perhaps chiefly, among the well-to-do, until they have impressed upon them the true ideal of life as struggle for spiritual worth—for insight and love and will—and conjured up before them the picture of the new heavens and the new earth, the scene of the ever-deepening intimacy of pure, free spirits. They must make their settlement the very centre of the city's life, its school, its college, its university, its church, its ethical society, and its theatre, all in one, all guided by the same lofty aim. They must endeavor to withdraw those that join them from the world that is, with

its selfishness, its vanity, its love of show and foolish, aimless amusement, and make them the first citizens of the world that is to come, with its friendship, its simplicity, and its active interest in all worthy things. They must interest themselves in all social movements and endeavor to give them a spiritual turn. They must establish an institution which shall do for the natural, freedom-guided life of the future what the church undertook to do for the authority-awed life of the past. And they will have much to learn from the church, above all, its discipline, and its care for souls, adding thereto the care of bodies. Discipline is the backbone of every gospel that has any chance of success. All great religions, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, have been, above all, disciplines, institutions for training the affections and the will, as well as the intellect. There is no worthy religion that does not set its followers a great task, demanding self-abnegation and heroic endeavor. Through such task alone does man become aware of his divinity, and blest in that awareness. And, after all, discipline is the nurse of freedom. We have to be trained to be free, in any sense in which freedom has any value.

When our little knot of men and women have fully established themselves in one city, have increased in numbers, and have learned by experience what regulations, forms, and activities are most conducive to their ends, they will send out bands of apostles to establish settlements in other cities, just as the mediæval monasteries did, until gradually the whole nation and, finally, the whole world, is leavened with the new spirit—the spirit that underlies our American institutions—buried, at present, alas! how deep!

As to our second question, relating to the future form of social life, it is not easy to give it a definite answer. That it will be different from the present form, is very certain: *that* is already giving way under the pressure of circumstances. The family, living in its isolated abode, with its servants, regarded and treated as inferiors, its private kitchen, laundry, and dining room, its exclusive parties, and the rest, belongs to an obsolete, inhumane, and un-American order of things, against which the apartment-house, and the family-hotel, are

clear protests. No less so is the summer-hotel, where many families that in winter occupy separate houses, meet at a common table, and in a common drawing-room, and seem thoroughly to enjoy it. All this, I think, points to the conclusion that the type of future life will be the monastery, with the family, instead of the individual, for its unit. Such a mode of life would solve many difficulties—the servant question, the questions of the poor and the unemployed, and so forth. It would afford that combination of society and solitude which is best for man: it would enable families of moderate means to share and enjoy much, not accessible to them in their isolation, good art, good music, good literature, good conversation, etc., etc. It would be most civilizing and humanizing in its effect. The old, ascetic, other-worldly, nature-mutilating monasteries have almost passed away, with the view of life which gave them birth; but it may be that they will revive under a new form to meet the needs of the higher, humaner, completer life that is to be. Yet all this is merely a suggestion, a surmise. No one can at present tell with certainty, what the form of twentieth century life will be. Only one thing, I think, is certain. The family, as a moral institution, will attain increased significance; as the chief centre of the efforts of all its members, the goal of a man's business ambition, and the main outlet for his wealth, it will sink in importance as it ought, and give place to a larger object of interest. The man whose labor and thought are expended altogether on his family, is only one step above the man who labors and plans only for himself. A man is often an angel to his family and a demon to all the rest of the world. The diamonds for the wife often cost the bread of the poor. This should not be so.

This is not the first time I have spoken of these things, these aspirations and hopes. They are my daily and hourly companions. But I seldom find that they meet with much response, when I speak them out. They mean toil of mind and body; they mean courage, independence, self-abnegation, a laying down of one's own life and a taking up of that of the world; they mean willingness to undergo obloquy, neglect, derision; they mean dying in order to live. And for these things there

are few people, in this morally unheroic and self-seeking time, prepared. Everyone feels that his task is the attainment of temporal well-being for himself; and so the task of the centuries, the task of eternity hardly appeals to him. Nay, he is often fain to forget that there is any eternity, and so is content to live the life of the ephemeron. But this cannot always be so. Even in this matter-ridden time, and even as a reaction against materialism, there must soon arise a few people for whom the interests of eternity shall outbid the interests of time, and an apostolate be found to begin the task of the twentieth century.

“For unto each man his handiwork, unto each a crown,
The just Fate gives;
Whoso takes upon him the world’s life, and his own lays down,
He dying so, lives.

Whoso bears the whole heaviness of the wronged world’s weight,
And puts it by,
It is well with him suffering though he face man’s fate:
How should he die?

Seeing death hath no part in him any more, no power
Upon his head.
He hath bought his eternity with a little hour,
And is not dead.

For an hour, if ye look for him, he is no more found,
For one hour’s space;
Then ye lift up your eyes to him, and behold him crowned,
A deathless face.

On the mountains of memory, by the world’s well-springs,
In all men’s eyes,
Where the light of the life of him is on all past things:
Death only dies.”*

THOMAS DAVIDSON.